Ministry of Social Services

Annual Report for 2015-16

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Government of Saskatchewan

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Letters of Transmittal

Her Honour, the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield,
Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

May it Please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to increased accountability, to honouring its commitments, and to managing expenditures responsibly on behalf of Saskatchewan people.

We will continue to build on these achievements in the year ahead as we deliver on Government's commitments to the people of Saskatchewan.

Donna Harpauer,
Minister of Social Services

Honourable Donna Harpauer,
Minister of Social Services

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016.

I acknowledge responsibility for this report and assure that the information contained herein is accurate, complete, and reliable. I further acknowledge responsibility for the financial administration and management control of the Ministry.

J. Greg Miller,
Deputy Minister of Social Services

Introduction

This annual report for the Ministry of Social Services presents the Ministry's results on activities and outcomes for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016. It reports to the public and elected officials on public commitments made and other key accomplishments of the Ministry.

Results are provided on publicly committed strategies, actions, and performance measures identified in the 2015-16 Plan.

The report also demonstrates progress made on Government commitments in the Government Direction for 2015-16: Steady Growth, the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond, throne speeches, and other commitments and activities of the Ministry.

The annual report demonstrates the Ministry's commitment to effective public performance reporting, transparency, and accountability to the public.

Alignment with Government's Direction

The Ministry's activities in 2015-16 align with Government's vision and four goals:

Our Government's Vision

"... to be the best place in Canada to live, work, start a business, get an education, raise a family and build a life."

- **Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people**
- **Meeting the challenges of growth**
- **Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people**
- **Delivering responsive and responsible government**

Together, all ministries and agencies support the achievement of Government's four goals and work towards a secure and prosperous Saskatchewan.

Ministry Overview

As the Ministry of Social Services, we exist to help Saskatchewan's most vulnerable citizens. We often meet people during the most challenging times of their lives. We are here to help keep Saskatchewan strong by supporting and strengthening its most precious resource – its people. Although we deliver programs and services to those in most need, the most important thing we do is provide hope for a better tomorrow.

Our Mission

We deliver programs and services that help people in need achieve a better quality of life.

Our Mandate

The Ministry helps children to be safe from abuse and neglect and helps individuals meet their basic needs and participate in their community.

The Ministry assists these efforts through income support, child and family services, supports for people with disabilities, by providing and helping develop affordable housing, and by building greater capacity in community-based organizations.

With a 2015-16 budget of just over $1 billion and about 1,900 employees, Social Services is one of the largest ministries in the Government of Saskatchewan and serves more than 200,000 people annually, or nearly one in five Saskatchewan residents.

Ministry programs are delivered through 20 service centres and more than 40 offices in communities across the province. Initial application for the Ministry's financial assistance programs is primarily through a central, telephone-based Client Service Centre. Applicants for the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program may choose to visit the local Service Centre nearest their home.

The Ministry interacts with citizens in many ways including face-to-face meetings in our offices, by telephone, through in-home meetings, by email, by responding to web site inquiries as well as through our many community-based partners across the province.

Associated Offices:

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation

Housing programs and services are offered through the Ministry by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), a Treasury Board Crown Corporation with offices in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert. SHC leads the development of provincial housing policy and manages financial contributions from the provincial, federal, and municipal levels of government. SHC, in partnership with housing authorities, the public and private sector, has provided access to affordable, suitable and adequate housing to people who have an identified need and who could not afford it without assistance.

The Status of Women Office

The Status of Women Office (SWO) acts as a catalyst within government to raise awareness of issues affecting women and their families and to ensure gender considerations are integrated into all aspects of government policy-making, legislation and program development.

The SWO is leading this work across our province through collaboration with government ministries, Crown corporations, agencies, and others.

The Office of Disability Issues

The Office of Disability Issues serves as a focal point for government initiatives on disabilities. The Office collaborates and partners with the disability community and has a direct working relationship with other ministries and the public.

Partnerships and Operating Agreements

The Ministry held about 800 contracts with approximately 200 community-based organizations across the province in 2015-16 – an investment of over $260 million.

Services that we contract through community-based organizations range from group homes for people with intellectual disabilities to mobile crisis units.

Just over 260 housing authorities deliver SHC's rental housing programs, and manage SHC's housing portfolio. Other housing partners include non-profit corporations and co-operatives, Aboriginal housing providers, and private landlords who own and manage housing for low- and moderate-income tenants. SHC also works with municipalities, provincial government ministries, and the federal government to integrate housing programs and services with other key initiatives.

The Ministry delegates the provision of child protection services and services for children in care on-reserve to First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies through 17 Delegation Agreements between the Ministry and First Nations agencies. The Ministry also has separate agreements with three of these agencies to provide child protection services in particular off-reserve communities.

Our Progress in 2015-16

We are pleased to report on our Ministry progress in 2015-16. The work we accomplished in the past year was done in support of the Government of Saskatchewan's four goals.

Our work in 2015-16 focused on areas where the Ministry of Social Services could make the most difference in the lives of our vulnerable clients. To that end, our Ministry's three goals for 2015-16 align with the Government of Saskatchewan's.

But most importantly, they align with the needs of those we serve across the province.

Our goals are to ensure:

- Our programs and services set the foundation to meet our clients' basic needs.
- Citizens gain independence through self-reliance and prevention.
- Our people and our organization are effective and efficient.

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people
Meeting the challenges of growth
Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people
Delivering responsive and responsible government

Our Goal:

Our programs and services set the foundation to meet our clients' basic needs.

Beyond the Call of Duty – 2015 Wildfire Response

The 2015 northern forest fires were one of the worst natural disasters in recent memory and created the largest evacuation in Saskatchewan's history. When the 724 fires were finally under control or out, they had burned 1.8 million hectares of land and displaced 13,000 people from 54 communities.

Emergency Social Services (ESS) went above and beyond the call of duty during the evacuation, often dealing with a number of "firsts" such as evacuee intakes exceeding 1,000 people per day and out-of-province evacuee transfers. But the best stories happened behind the scenes in the midst of everyday life as people tried to make the best of an extremely difficult situation.

During the rapid evacuation of La Loche, a teenage girl was separated from her family. In the midst of the busy evacuation of her community, she ended up at the evacuation center in Cold Lake, Alberta, while her family was re-located to Regina. Upon hearing about this unfortunate separation, ESS staff working at Cold Lake volunteered to drive her to where she could be reunited with her family. They were happily together a short while later thanks to the caring efforts of ESS team members.

There was another instance where a vulnerable young adult evacuee who was staying in Regina required emergency medical attention. An ESS staff member attended the emergency room with her and another member of her community. After waiting with them at the ER, the staff member made sure they had a meal and were settled in a local hotel for the evening. Over the next few days, the staff member continued to check in on the evacuees on a regular basis to make sure they were okay and had everything they needed.

These are but a couple of examples of how ESS staff showed their dedication to the people of Northern Saskatchewan during that difficult time. From rocking babies to playing football, having coffee with elders, playing video games, or simply lending an ear, the evacuation brought out the very best in our staff and showed how much they care for people in need.

The Importance of Housing

Many of us take housing for granted. Having a place to call home is such a basic need, but without one, life can be difficult. The path to a better life begins with a place where families can put down roots, plan for their future, and become a part of the community. Safe, affordable housing not only improves the well-being of those in greatest need, but also strengthens the social fabric of our province, making life better for all Saskatchewan people.

How We Help

One of Saskatchewan Housing Corporation's (SHC) goals is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by helping to meet this most basic of needs.

In 2015[1] alone, $132 million was invested to develop 1,777 units and repair 315 homes across the province. Since 2007, SHC has invested over $696 million to build or repair more than 14,600 housing units.

Through SHC, a number of programs were delivered in partnership with municipalities, community-based organizations, and the private sector to ensure safe, affordable and adequate housing for people in need.

We were able to provide more affordable rental and homeownership opportunities for people with low-income through initiatives like the Secondary Suite Program, Rental Development Program, and through our partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Since 2007, 133 units have been completed or are under development through Habitat for Humanity (56 in 2015), 2,923 through the Rental Development Program (911 in 2015), and 421 through the Secondary Suites Program (134 in 2015).

In addition, SHC is targeting investments to serve people in greatest housing need by supporting several government strategies including the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Provincial Disability Strategy, and the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan.

Increasing the availability of affordable housing is an important part of these plans. As these strategies roll out over the next few years, SHC will assist in the development of projects to help people whose needs aren't being met.

Helping People Find a Home

Despite record numbers of new rental units and increased vacancy rates, some households still face affordability challenges. Households, such as those impacted by disabilities, mental health, or addictions issues, also face additional barriers to finding and retaining suitable housing.

In response to the affordability challenge, SHC has converted the Affordable Housing Rental Program to the Social Housing Rental Program. This change ensures households in greatest need pay rents they can afford. Once the conversion is completed, approximately 2,700 units will have tenants paying rent based on 30 per cent of their income instead of a fixed rate.

Having access to safe, affordable housing is especially important for people experiencing disabilities. In order to support the Provincial Disability Strategy, SHC worked to ensure that options were available to people in need of housing.

- Invested $1.1 million to support completion of eleven affordable rental units designed for people experiencing disabilities through programs like the Summit Action Fund and the Rental Development Program, for a total of $2.2 million invested in 34 units since 2007.
- Ensured that almost 700 SHC rental units are accessible to help meet the housing needs of people experiencing disabilities.
- Supported third-party organizations that provide housing to people experiencing disabilities. These organizations operate over 70 independent living projects (totaling nearly 1,000 units) and nearly 70 special purpose projects (housing nearly 500 people who are experiencing mental illness or cognitive/physical disabilities). Most of these special purpose projects are group homes that provide full supports to their clients.

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1. *Data for SHC are presented in the calendar year (January 1 - December 31, 2015).*

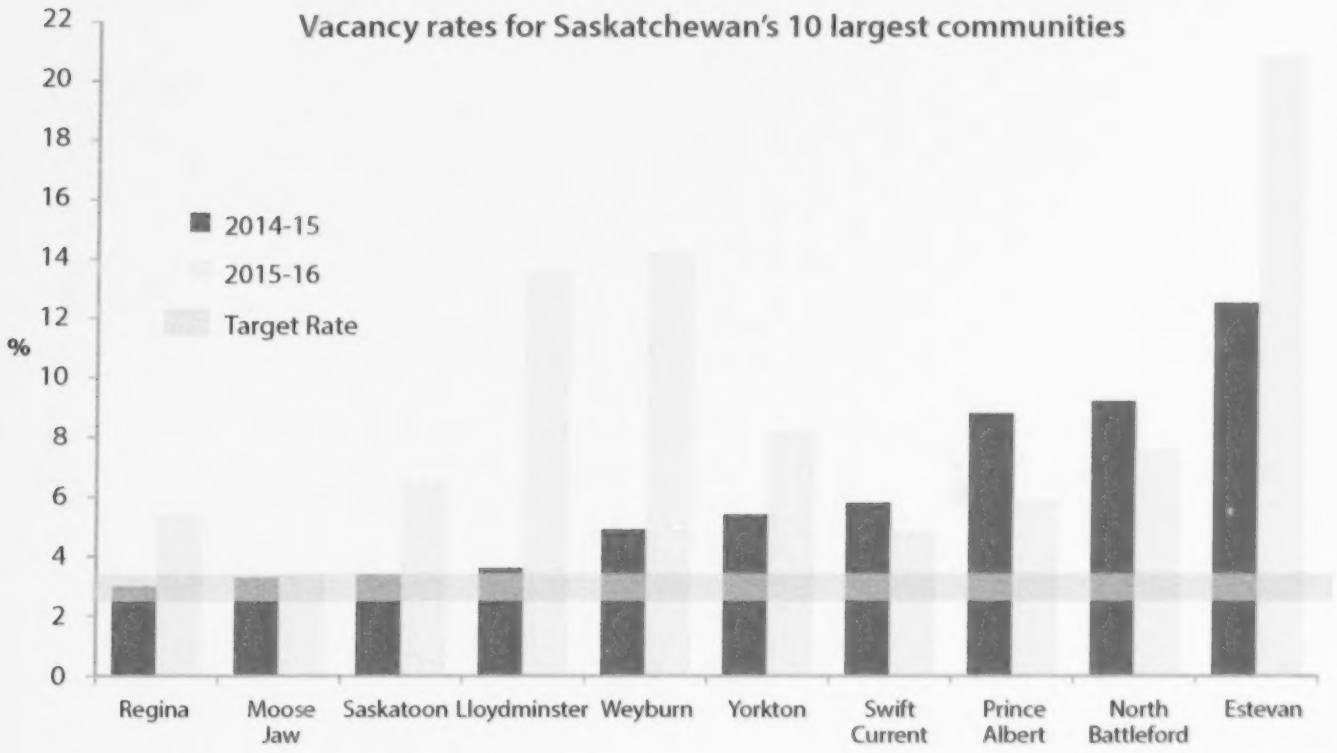
This type of support is illustrated best in the story behind the development of Fromm Manor in Yorkton. In 2013, the City of Yorkton identified the need for additional housing for single adults experiencing physical disabilities, cognitive disabilities and/or a mental health condition. They found that this group had trouble getting and keeping safe, affordable housing. This led to increased reliance on more costly supports such as health care and more involvement with the justice system. As a result, support workers were spending much of their time trying to find appropriate shelter and relocating their clients instead of helping them with other needs.

These individuals needed the stability in their lives that only safe, affordable housing can provide. The solution to this problem was Fromm Manor. Built in 2015 thanks to funding under the Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement, the project has 11 accessible bachelor suites, each with a separate entrance, small patio and yard for residents to call their own. The units are also centrally located with easy access to grocery stores, a laundromat, drug stores, doctors, and all the service agencies that provide them with supports. In August 2015, 11 young adults moved into their brand new suites, something that they would have never dreamed possible.

Balancing Vacancy Rates

Vacancy rates continued to rise in 2015-16. Generally, a vacancy rate between 2.5 and 3.5 per cent allows a variety of choice for renters and a fair rate of return on investments for landlords. As of December 2015, the provincial vacancy rate was 6.4 per cent, which is outside of the balanced range of 2.5-3.5 per cent.

While a number of Saskatchewan cities reported increased vacancy rates in 2015, not all of them followed the same upward trend. North Battleford, Prince Albert and Swift Current all recorded moderate declines in their vacancy rates between 2014 and 2015. Over the same period, Moose Jaw was the only community to show no change in the vacancy rate.



Meeting Needs in the North

SHC continued work with partners in northern communities to help meet their housing needs both now and into the future.

SHC, northern partners, and the housing sector are working to find creative ways to reduce Saskatchewan's housing pressures in the North. In 2015, SHC invested $1.5 million to develop 11 new rental units in northern communities. In addition, over $62,000 has been invested to repair six homes and ensure families have a safe place to live.

In order to help with the current housing situation, SHC worked with a committee of northern people to develop recommendations to address their needs. As a result, SHC began work on selling 50 of their Social Housing units at fair market value to tenants, providing an opportunity for these clients to purchase and own their own homes. The sale of these homes will also allow SHC to reinvest the money into brand new housing for northern clients in need.

And as SHC looked to the future, it decided to expand and adapt the Encouraging Community Housing Options (ECHO) program for northern communities. This program provides cost-matched funding to municipalities and regions to help with the cost of housing planning and encourages them to increase housing supply.

In 2015, 12 housing plans were completed and this will make a positive impact in how eight communities manage their housing growth. In addition, six commitments have been made to support municipalities to take action on housing issues that were identified through their housing plans.

Investing in Affordable Housing

Over the past year, we worked closely with our partners such as the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to invest in affordable housing.

2015 was the second year of the five-year extension to the Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Agreement. Under this agreement, SHC continues to deliver programs that support the creation of new affordable housing for low- to moderate-income earners and repairs existing housing. This agreement will invest up to $92 million over five years to ensure that households with the greatest need have better access to sound, suitable, and sustainable housing.

(If you are interested in learning more about the great work we do with our federal housing partner, CMHC, you'll find additional detail in Appendix B.)

We're a Good Landlord

SHC is the largest landlord in the province. It owns over 18,000 homes across Saskatchewan. In addition, 10,800 units including 6,724 rental units and 4,076 special purpose housing units (i.e. special care and group home beds) are owned and operated by nearly 250 different non-profit groups and co-operatives. In total, SHC provided support for households living in approximately 29,000 housing units in 2015. We work hard to provide good, clean, safe homes for the many families, individuals, seniors and people with special needs who are our tenants, and we value and appreciate their feedback.

The following comments are part of a letter from a senior living in housing provided by one of our First Nation housing partners:

"Living here has improved my quality of life 500 per cent. Previously, I lived in a small house which was cold and needed a lot of upgrades – the furnace was in the living room and the bathroom felt like a closet. The natural lighting and larger living space in my new place makes it a blessing to be living here. The design of the building encourages interaction with other tenants and the close proximity to a grocery store, dollar store and strip mall is a huge benefit to all tenants."

Government Goals

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people | Meeting the challenges of growth | **Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people** | Delivering responsive and responsible government

Our Goal:

Citizens gain independence through self-reliance and prevention.

Helping Children and Families

Throughout 2015-16, we continued our commitment to support our clients through difficult times in their lives. For some, that is learning to manage the challenges of illness or disability; for others, it's establishing new foundations for a heathy life – a stable home, stronger parenting skills, an education, a better life.

The story below is one we are really pleased to share. It's a great example of how the Ministry helped a family stay together despite some very challenging circumstances.

Jean and Steve[1], and their young children, are a blended family from a small, rural community. All of the children were brought into the Ministry's care after a number of unsuccessful attempts to help the family stay together in their own home. Cognitive impairment and mental illness made it impossible for these parents to safely care for their children at home.

Jean suffers from depression and Steve has a cognitive impairment. The children born to Jean and Steve are cognitively delayed. Jean fell into a deep depression trying to meet the needs of her family. She became unable to care for anyone, including herself. Steve tried to take over care of the family, but was overwhelmed. Eventually, the family became isolated from the community and the children became severely neglected.

Neighbours made social services and health professionals aware of their concerns for the family. Jean and Steve were referred to parenting support programs and services to meet the significant health and developmental needs of the children. However, Jean was unable to respond because of her illness, and Steve was unable to manage because of his disability. The children's health soon declined and household conditions deteriorated. By fall of 2013, it was clear that Jean and Steve could not safely care for their family and the children were placed in out-of-home care.

Two years later, in the fall of 2015, Social Services offered Jean and Steve a place in an intensive, family-based residential treatment program operated by Foxvalley Counselling Services Inc., a community-based organization supported by the Ministry. The intent of the program is to reunify families and reduce the number of children in out-of-home care. Jean and Steve entered the program and within a couple of months, were reunited with their children.

Nine months into the one-year program, the family is stable. Jean, Steve and the children have been connected to, and participate in, community activities that support healthy development and family cohesiveness. Their home is clean and safe. The children attend school, and programming is in place to support the family's health and developmental needs. Jean is successfully managing her health and home, and Steve is enrolled in a full-time employment support program and looks forward to returning to work. The family is preparing to transition to independence.

Nine months into the one-year program, the family is stable. Jean, Steve and the children have been connected to, and participate in, community activities that support healthy development and family cohesiveness.

We're so happy for Jean, Steve and their family! And we're grateful for community partners like Foxvalley Counselling, who do great work helping Saskatchewan families.

1. *No real names are used in any of the stories provided.*

Keeping Children Safe

Frederick Douglas once said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." In Saskatchewan, children are our most precious and vulnerable citizens. As parents, grandparents, family, and friends, we care deeply about our children and want to ensure they have every opportunity to live happy, fulfilling lives.

At the Ministry of Social Services, we want the same thing for children in our care. Their safety and well-being is our number one priority. We have worked hard to make sure that the best interests of children and families are met through numerous programs and services.

This past year, we continued to focus on providing supports to keep families intact and children safely cared for in the family home through prevention services including Intensive In-Home Supports, the Positive Parenting Program, and Flexible Response.

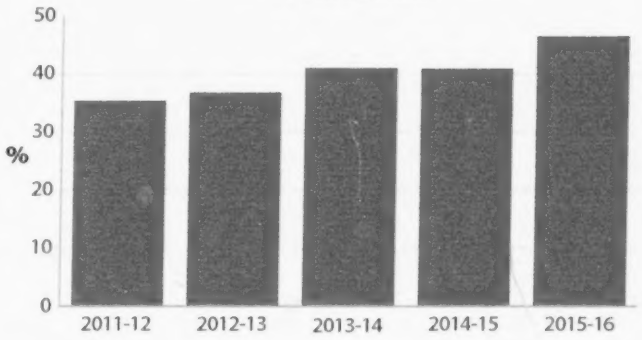
Intensive In-Home Supports are offered to families in crisis by our community partners to ensure the personal safety of children while allowing them to stay at their family home or be placed with extended family. These services are offered in Regina, Saskatoon, Yorkton and Prince Albert.

The Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) focuses on enhancing the knowledge, skills and confidence of parents. We do this by engaging, encouraging, and empowering families to manage common child and adolescent social skills, emotions and behaviours. The program is delivered by Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in Yorkton, Sandy Bay, Meadow Lake, Humboldt, Swift Current and Regina, and by two First Nations Agencies – Peter Ballantyne Child and Family Services, and Lac La Ronge Indian Child and Family Services.

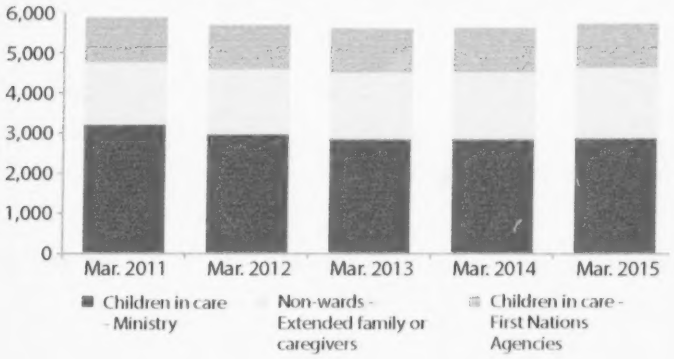
The Flexible Response approach, which emphasizes family-focused, strength based and culturally appropriate ways to support child safety and family well-being, is operating in Saskatoon. Efforts to expand to the south service area of the province will begin in 2016-17.

When children cannot be safely cared for by their immediate family, we try to place them with extended family caregivers and reunify families when it is safe to do so. We worked hard this year to increase the proportion of children placed with extended family. We are pleased to report that 43 per cent of children in out-of-home care were placed with extended family members or caregivers as of March 2016, which is up from 41 per cent in March 2015.

Children placed with extended family or caregivers



Number of children in out-of-home care



Over the past year, Child and Family Programs continued its work to reduce the number of children coming into care due to neglect. At the end of March 2016, 79 children entered out of home care due to neglect, which is down from 105 at the end of March 2015, and is also 20 per cent better than the target we set for 2018.

We were also pleased to see amendments to The Adoption Regulations, 2003, proclaimed in February. These amendments will support increased access to live birth registration by birth parents and adoptees. These changes go into effect on January 2017. Adoptees and birth parents are encouraged to visit ***www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/births-deaths-marriages-and-divorces/births-and-adoptions/adoption/post-adoption-services*** for important information.

The Ministry also continues to work with both the public and our community partners to make necessary changes to ***The Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)*** and ***The Adoption Act, 1998***. These changes are necessary to achieve the goals of the Child Welfare Transformation Strategy, which include working differently with First Nations and Métis people, focusing on prevention, and renewing the child welfare system.

Another important focus for us this past year was working more closely with our First Nations agencies and organizations to ensure that children received the best care possible.

Child welfare services delivered by First Nations Child and Family Service agencies are an important part of the Ministry's mandate. Status Indian, Métis, Non-status Indian and Inuit children are significantly over-represented among children in out-of-home care, so it is vital that we have agreements in place with First Nations agencies to help deliver services.

We continue to encourage First Nations Child and Family Service agencies to pursue accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). Accreditation requires the agency to meet strict standards. In 2015, Sturgeon Lake Child and Family Services became the third such agency to receive accreditation.

We also supported First Nations agencies in their use of Structured Decision Making (SDM) – a tool that improves decision making when providing child protection. This work is underway in order to strengthen the relationship with First Nations and the agencies that provide child welfare services to ensure a seamless response for both on- and off-reserve prevention and protection services. To date, 88 per cent of First Nations Child and Family Service agencies have implemented or are implementing SDM, including five who adopted the tool in 2015-16.

Improving Life for People with Disabilities

This is one of the Ministry's most important goals. We need to improve the quality of life and support community inclusion for all people in our province who are experiencing disabilities.

In 2015-16, the Citizen Consultation Team released Saskatchewan's Disability Strategy, *People Before Systems: Transforming the Experience of Disability in Saskatchewan*. This report was the culmination of many months of hard work by the Citizen Consultation Team as they worked closely with the disability community, the public, community-based organizations, post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal communities, health authorities and other government bodies. By the end of the public consultation process, more than 1600 people had shared their stories, ideas and solutions for how to make our province more inclusive and supportive of people experiencing disability.

In total, 15 public meetings were held in 11 communities across the province, and sessions focusing on Aboriginal perspectives were held in eight locations including northern Saskatchewan.

The Minister of Social Services accepted the Strategy on behalf of the Province and committed to providing a response in the Fall of 2015. Government announced six initial actions to officially begin the rollout of the Disability Strategy. This initial work will lay the foundation required to realize the vision set forth in the 10-year strategy. The six priorities are:

1. Accessible and safe transportation so people can participate in their communities;
2. Respite to help families and caregivers get a break from their caregiving roles;
3. Accessibility legislation to create more inclusive communities;
4. Residential services to help people live in their homes and communities;
5. Service co-ordination and navigation so people can find disability services when they need them; and
6. Awareness and understanding of the rights of people experiencing disabilities so all citizens have greater understanding and respect for their rights.

We know that ongoing partnerships and collaboration will be important in the implementation of the Disability Strategy, and we look forward to working with our partners as we move ahead on this important work.

Navigating the System

The Ministry provides funding to many CBOs that work with individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues. We are always pleased to learn that our funding, through the work of our CBO partners, is making a positive impact with clients. Here is a story about a client named TJ whose life was changed as a result of these partnerships.

TJ had to deal with a lot in his life. He was born with an intellectual disability and lived with his mom until he was seven, when he was removed from her home and put into foster care. While in care, he moved around to many different foster homes. During this period, he moved back in with his mom from time to time, but it never worked out and he always ended up back in care.

TJ was very angry about his situation and became very destructive and aggressive, causing his many placements to break down. Once he turned 18, TJ moved into a couple different group homes and also lived with his girlfriend. However, those placements did not work out either. At one point, the RCMP brought him to Royal University Hospital (RUH) for a psychiatric evaluation because they were concerned with the way he was acting. TJ continued to be angry and cause destruction almost every day. In one of his last placements, TJ caused thousands of dollars in damage to a group home, and had to leave. He was then admitted to the North Battleford Mental Health Center and lived there for two years before being moved to a crisis and transitional home in 2014.

It was at the transitional home where everything started to turn around for TJ. He was able to work with some support staff there and slowly started to believe they really cared for and wouldn't give up on him. For the first time, TJ was doing things that he really enjoyed. He got involved in the "Free to be Me" program where he was able to work and help out with animals, which he loved and was really good at. Through this program, TJ was also able to work in the community, helping with manual labour tasks like shoveling snow and cleaning up construction sites.

But what TJ was really waiting for was a real home.

Then, in 2015, he started talking to people from Saskatchewan Alternative Initiatives (SAI), and they accepted him to live in one of their homes. Not only would he be moving to one of their homes, but a brand new basement suite. In February of 2016, TJ proudly moved into his new home with SAI – a brand new suite. He likes where he is living and that he has a place of his own. But don't take our word for it. Take a read of TJ's testimonial below:

Things have been really going well for me. For the first time in a very long time, I am right where I'm supposed to be.

I do not think of the support staff as "staff", they are my friends. I have met their friends and family and they make me feel like I belong, like I am part of their team. We always do lots of cool things, from going to Rush games to watching them play in their band to just hanging out playing Frisbee in the park. I am currently looking for somewhere to work to make some extra cash. My next big goal is to get my driver's license and pick up my car from my family's farm. I am also planning a visit with my mom. Things have been really going well for me. For the first time in a very long time, I am right where I am supposed to be.

We're so happy for TJ and so grateful to the over 200 CBOs we work with across Saskatchewan for their great work in supporting our province's most vulnerable people.

Investing in Independence

Throughout the past year, we also continued implementing recommendations that came from the Task Team on Income Support for People with Disabilities.

At the end of 2015-16, enrolment in the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disabilities (SAID) program was approximately 1.9 per cent of the provincial population, which is already meeting the 2018 target. This program provides people experiencing significant and enduring disabilities with a better quality of life and greater dignity and respect.

In 2015-16, we increased the SAID benefit for the fourth year in a row. In June of 2015, people living in residential care saw an increase of $20 per month, while those who rent, own, or live in room and board accommodations received an increase of $50 a month for individuals and $55 a month for couples. With this increase, the average benefit for a single person living independently on SAID has increased by $350 per month since 2012.

We also continued our work in 2015-16 to transition people living at Valley View Centre (VVC) in Moose Jaw into the communities of their choice.

As of March 2016, 28 VVC residents have successfully transitioned into the community, and active transition plans are in various stages for the remaining 143 residents.

Successfully transitioning VVC residents into the community takes a great deal of planning with the resident and their families. The story below is just one example of how proper planning can make a real difference in the life of a resident when they move into their new home.

Following the announcement of the closure of VVC in 2012, many family members of residents expressed their concerns about their loved ones transitioning from VVC. Many of the residents had resided at the Centre since it opened in 1955, and they were concerned that their loved ones would not receive the same excellent care that the Centre provided and continues to provide in the community.

One such family was resistant to their sister Rita transitioning from VVC. Because of their concerns, we continued to engage Rita's family throughout the transition process. In this situation, Rita's family members are her legal guardians. They felt that it was in Rita's best interest that she not be a part of any team meetings regarding her future transition in case it would upset her and result in more negative behaviours.

To ensure that Rita would have her wishes considered during the transition, her Community Service Worker (CSW) at VVC would meet informally with Rita to get her input about what moving looked like for her. The CSW would then share this information at the team meetings. Once the family understood that the closure of VVC was inevitable, they consulted with Rita's VVC Home Supervisor with whom they had a long standing and trusting relationship. As a result of this consultation, it was agreed that Rita should be part of any transition planning meetings that involved her, and if she became upset, the meetings would end. During this time, it was determined that Rita should transition into a home in the community of Moose Jaw.

Rita and her Person Centered Planning Team met with an agency, and when Rita's CSW explained the purpose of the meeting and that Rita could make the final decision about where she wanted to live, she agreed to listen. At the end of the meeting, when she was asked what she thought about moving to a group home and not living at the Centre anymore, Rita yelled "I'll take it! – It's mine! – I want a blue room!" Rita was beaming!

When the transition took place in October of 2015, Rita settled in very quickly and made the choice to have physiotherapy treatments in her home instead of at VVC. Despite her limited vision and reduced mobility, Rita took pride in the chores she did in her new home, such as collecting mail. Rita then decided that she would like a job outside of the home to make a little extra spending money, so the agency helped her find a job folding towels at a local fitness facility. After working there for a little while, Rita negotiated a salary increase higher than the average rate of pay! Her argument to her new employer was that she should receive more than minimum wage since she is only able to work one hour a week due to some health issues. Rita loves her new home, her independence, her job, continual visits from VVC staff, and the community. Rita is also enjoying her three other housemates, her care providers, and living in the group home. And in December of 2015, the agency helped Rita get tickets to a Rory Allen Concert in Moose Jaw – a dream come true for one of the world's biggest Elvis fans!

Rita's family visits her in her new home on a regular basis and enjoys watching her self-esteem, confidence and independence grow. They are extremely happy with all the planning that went into their sister's transition and are very grateful for how everything turned out. The family believes that this transition was one of the best things that could have happened to their sister.

As a part of our ongoing commitment to enhance the quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities, a self-directed funding pilot has continued through the 2015-16 fiscal year. The assessment of the outcomes is slated for the 2016-17 fiscal year.

Reducing Poverty

In order to help people with low income improve their quality of life, we supported the development of a Poverty Reduction Strategy in collaboration with other government ministries and community partners.

The Advisory Group on Poverty Reduction hosted a Poverty Reduction Roundtable in April 2015 in Saskatoon. More than 100 participants representing more than 60 organizations from across the province met to discuss ways to reduce poverty in Saskatchewan.

The Advisory Group provided its recommendations in August, and the Ministries of Health, Justice, Corrections and Policing, Economy, Education and Social Services released the Saskatchewan Poverty Reduction Strategy in February 2016 in response. The Strategy includes a focus on redesigning Income Assistance Programs and expanding housing for people with mental health and addictions issues who are considered "hard to house".

Making Life Better for Vulnerable People

This past year, we worked with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to increase the quality and availability of prevention services for vulnerable people and families.

In order to ensure CBOs were able to continue their important work in the community over the past year, the Ministry provided $2.3 million in new funding to help avoid staffing shortfalls. To make sure that CBOs remain sustainable into the future, five teams made up of people from the human services sector were formed to work on a multi-year sustainability plan. A special group made up of Ministry staff and the Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centers (SARC) was also created to provide leadership and direction to the five teams. Most of the teams have established their work plans and continue to move foward on their mandates.

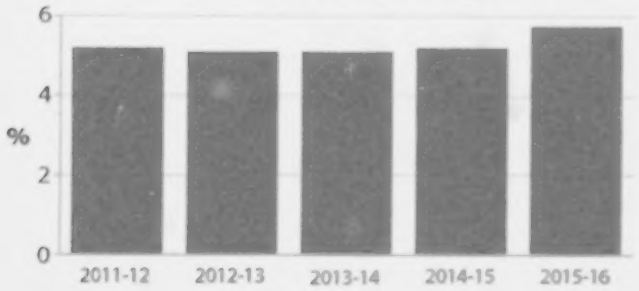
Helping People to Help Themselves

One of the best things we get to see in our Ministry are people stepping away from the support we provide and stepping into an independent life through a new job or better education.

In 2015-16, we began work on redesigning Income Assistance so that clients wouldn't have as many barriers to achieving their dreams. We reviewed our programs and developed a strategy to simplify them, improve client service, and strengthen referral processes for employable clients. The next steps will be to implement the strategy.

The number of Income Assistance clients we serve fluctuates throughout the year. It is influenced by things like population change, the state of the economy, demand for labour, and disability rates.

People in Saskatchewan using social assistance



For us, fewer clients is a good thing – it means we were able to support more individuals and families to become independent.

Last year, the enrolment rate for income assistance in Saskatchewan stayed about the same at five per cent of the eligible population.

This number reflects those enrolled in the Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP), Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) or the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program.

Clients continued to leave us relatively quickly throughout the year with 72 per cent of SAP and TEA clients only needing our help for six months or less last year. This result already exceeds our 2018 target of 65 per cent.

*(*Note – "enrolment rate" refers to the number of people on the programs expressed as a percentage of the provincial population age 0-64 living off-reserve.)*

Government Goals

Delivering responsive and responsible government

Our Goal:

Our people and our organization are effective and efficient.

The Ministry is dedicated to helping our clients – the people we serve and support. By focusing on citizen-centred service delivery, we can ensure our programs are appropriate, effective, and efficiently delivered – meeting the right needs at the right time.

We are renewing our programs and services and the way they are delivered. This is being achieved through the development of a four-year Ministry plan that puts the "citizen as our north star", and has the following areas of focus:

- understanding citizen needs and expectations, and transforming how we work to deliver services more efficiently and effectively;
- continuously improving through innovation, responsible risk taking, program reviews, and process improvement efforts;
- working collaboratively across ministries to meet citizen needs; and,
- investing in the skills, capacity, and engagement of our workforce to enable employees to serve citizens with excellence.

In 2015-16, we continued our commitment to excellence in the delivery of programs and services in collaboration with our many partners.

Being Accountable

We are accountable to the people we serve and responsible for wisely using the public funds we are given. Throughout the past year, we did this by continuing to work on:

- a risk management strategy;
- a business technology plan;
- disaster recovery plan;
- an improved performance management system;
- business process improvement efforts; and,
- program reviews and evaluations.

The Ministry cares about personal privacy. We have completed a privacy policy and 98 per cent of staff has been trained. In addition a central point of contact has been initiated with a Centralized Information Management Unit.

Improving Client Outcomes

We make every effort to keep the client's perspective front and centre when we make improvements to our programs and services.

We continue to put the clients first in all the work we do.

In the past year, we continued to simplify our programs and services to improve client experience and facilitate better outcomes.

Some examples of this work from the past year would include: extensive stakeholder consultations in 15 communities with over 1,000 people to find out what Saskatchewan citizens who are experiencing disabilities need; organization of a poverty reduction roundtable seeking input and advice from more than 100 people representing more than 60 organizations; and a focus on ensuring that every program review in the Ministry includes the client's perspective.

Finding Innovative New Ways to Support Our Vulnerable Clients

The Ministry moved forward with a number of innovative projects that engage families, community partners, and businesses to work together on solutions to our most pressing social issues and improve the lives of our most vulnerable citizens.

The Sweet Dreams program is one such project. It is a multi-ministry initiative where Social Services, Health, Education and the Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre (EGADZ) are working together to help single mothers reach their full potential and prevent their children from entering foster care.

Sweet Dreams is also allowing the Ministry to pilot the Social Impact Bond (SIB) funding model, the first of its kind in Canada. This innovative funding approach allows governments and communities to proceed with social innovation projects more quickly while also increasing the accountability and transparency of the project. An evaluation of the Sweet Dreams SIB is underway.

Stronger Together – Working with Partners

In 2015-16, we worked with other governments, ministries, and community partners to improve the lives of Saskatchewan people.

We worked on the Saskatchewan Child and Family Agenda as a ministry partner to help meet the needs of children, youth, and families facing complex issues.

Several of our projects, including Flexible Response, Intensive In-Home Supports, and the Positive Parenting Program continue to support the Agenda's goals.

Through our Status of Women Office (SWO), we led the work across government to address key aspects of gender equality in the province.

We also collaborated with our partners in the ministries of Health, Education, Advanced Education, Economy, Government Relations, Justice, and Corrections and Policing on the initial actions for each of the 12 recommendations from the Disability Strategy.

We continued to review the sustainability of the community-based organization (CBO) sector to identify ways in which we can support and strengthen their efforts to recruit and retain staff.

The Ministry is also a partner in the Building Partnerships to Reduce Crime (BPRC) initiative designed to bring agencies together to deliver a range of human services in an integrated, timely manner. This past year, we took part in each of the 12 Hub tables operating in 13 communities across the province.

As part of the Healthy Families Initiative, we worked with the Ministries of Justice, Corrections and Policing, Health, and Education to develop an innovative approach to improve the quality of life and decrease government dependency among Saskatchewan's most vulnerable families.

We also had the opportunity to work with the Ministry of Health, the Legislative Secretary for Social Impact Bonds, and the Ministry of Finance on additional SIB development.

Last but certainly not least, we focused on ensuring our Ministry staff are supported in serving our clients. Below are a few updates on the work we are doing towards that important goal.

A Great Place to Work

At the Ministry of Social Services, our work tends to be stressful at times. Therefore, it's vital that our employees have a supportive, compassionate, and understanding place to work every day.

We believe our workplace culture is important and we have developed a Culture Committee and culture ambassadors, made up of staff from across the province. Throughout 2015-16, they have done some great work to enhance our ministry culture.

In 2015-16, our Culture Committee focused on employee recognition and launched the first ever Culture Recognition Awards. Staff can nominate their co-workers for awards in four categories that represent our core values: respect and integrity, serving citizens, excellence and innovation, and one team. There is also an award for overall service excellence. This program was created to support employee engagement and improve performance.

The Committee also began work to promote informal recognition, which will be implemented in the upcoming year along with a culture communications plan.

We also worked to increase four-year retention rates of young (under 35) employees. In an effort to do this, the Ministry created the Engaging and Developing Government Employees (EDGE) Youth Committee to advance the perspectives and opinions of young employees on topics like communication, innovation, learning and Public Service Renewal. At the end of 2015-16, the four-year employee retention rate was at 52 per cent. Our goal is to increase this rate to 75 per cent by 2018.

In addition to the EDGE Youth Committee, the Ministry continued to encourage staff to engage with other employee networks and forums such as the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender + (LGBT+) Network, Aboriginal Government Employees' Network, the Saskatchewan Visible Minority Employees Association, and the Disability Support Network.

We also want new employees to feel at home in our ministry and have a solid understanding of our workplace goals and culture. That is why we delivered three new full-day Employee Orientation sessions to over 75 new staff members last year.

We know our employees are doing great work supporting our clients across the province, and we want to make sure they know how much we appreciate them. We also want to make sure that they continue to provide the best customer service possible. In order to help achieve these important objectives, we provided eight Service Excellence workshops last year for 184 employees.

We also released a Code of Professional Conduct and an Employee Relationship with Clients Policy in January of 2016. The Code of Conduct sets out the rules, responsibilities and proper practices for Ministry employees, as well as a standard of conduct by which all employees are expected to abide.

Keeping Employees Safe at Work

Our employees work hard and sometimes, despite our best efforts, they are injured at work. We share in the Mission:Zero message and in 2015-16 we continued our commitment to decrease the number of workplace injuries.

Throughout the past year, we reduced our workplace injury rate from 6.3 per cent to 5.5 per cent. We were also able to reduce the amount of time lost due to workplace injuries in 2015. At the end of the 2015 calendar year, the time lost due to workplace injuries was 1,727 days, a significant improvement over the 2,382 days lost to injuries in 2014. We were able to achieve these improvements by implementing a number of items on the ministry's Safety Action Plan:

- delivered Safety Policy training;
- completed workplace inspections with corrective action plans;
- continued to focus on reducing slips, trips and falls and physical exertion injuries;
- developed safety visibility walls in all workplaces; and
- updated violence protocols in all workplaces.

We value the safety of our employees and will continue to work closely with them to ensure they return home injury free at the end of each work day.

Efforts to reduce our workplace injury rate and days lost to injury are ongoing. We continue to engage with our colleagues across the Government of Saskatchewan through participation on the Safety Champion Council and implementation of a government-wide strategies and actions that promote the achievement of Mission:Zero.

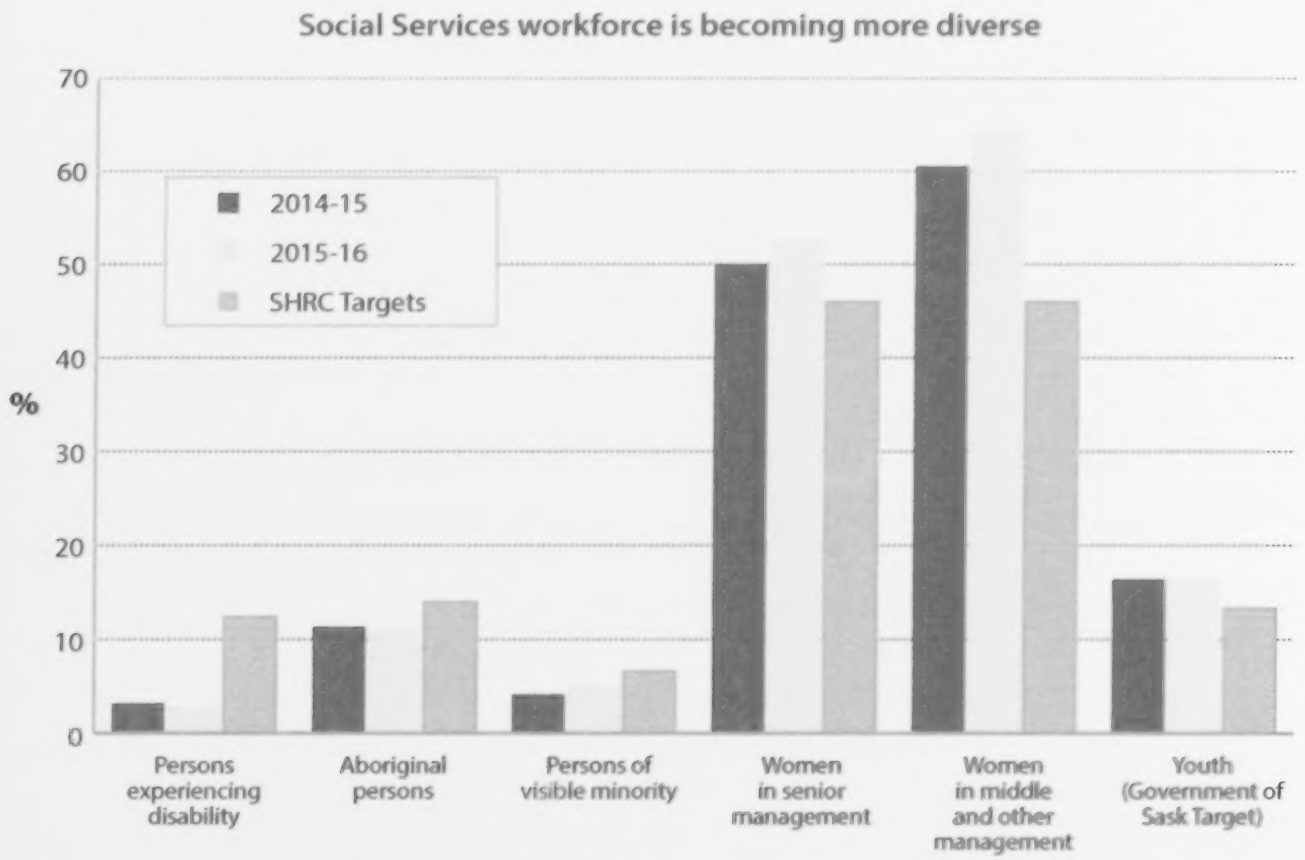
A Diverse Workforce

There are many reasons for organizations to have a diverse workforce. We believe strengthening diversity within the Ministry of Social Services will equip us to:

- provide culturally sensitive services by better reflecting the population of the province and our Ministry clients;
- consider a variety of opinions and experiences in order to become more creative in finding solutions to the challenges faced by our clients;
- ensure access to the widest talent pool possible in a tightening labour market; and
- increase employee engagement and retention.

Within the Ministry, our representation of youth and women in senior management positions continues to rise and exceed targets set by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission (SHRC).

In other areas such as the number of Aboriginal people, members of a visible minority or people with a disability, we continue to work toward meeting our targets.



It's important to us that our workforce understands and appreciates the diversity of our clients and is representative of that diversity.

In order to help us achieve these important objectives, we began development of a Diversity Plan in alignment with the Ministry's four-year strategic plan. We also put together a diversity survey to see where we are at as a Ministry. The survey was completed by our ministry leadership and we plan to distribute it to all employees next year.

We look forward to ongoing work in this area as we continue our commitments to provide effective supports to our clients.

In closing, while there is still much more work to be done for people in need across Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Social Services is proud of the work we did to help our clients last year.

The stories we shared in this year's annual report are just a few examples of the wonderful people we were able to support in realizing their dreams of independence and fuller lives.

2015-16 Financial Overview

Expenditures

The Ministry's actual expenditures for 2015-16 were $1.052 billion, which was $48 million over the original budgeted appropriation of $1.004 billion. The Ministry was provided additional funds through special warrant funding of $48 million to address Emergency Social Services costs for fire evacuations, increased caseloads for certain income assistance programs, and additional supports for child and family services programs.

Nearly a quarter of the budget shortfall was comprised of payments to the Red Cross for emergency evacuation services as a result of the extreme wildfires in late summer 2015. The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability and Rental Housing Supplements required additional funding due to increased caseloads as well as increased costs per case. As well, Child and Family Program Maintenance and Support experienced increased costs due to children with complex and special needs requirements and increased costs for private treatment care.

Revenues

Social Services collects revenues related to fees from Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, cost-sharing programs with the Federal Government, and receipts from clients who have been overpaid public assistance benefits in prior years. All revenue collected is deposited into the General Revenue Fund.

In 2015-16, the Ministry recorded revenues of $42.1 million, which was $13.6 million more than the budget of $28.5 million. The variance is largely attributed to revenue from the Federal Government for the costs of emergency evacuations due to wildfires on First Nation reserves and the amount of monies collected for overpayments.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Utilization

The Ministry's 2015-16 FTE budget was 1,731.0. The actual FTE utilization for the year was 1,833.7 FTEs, of which 54.8 FTEs were for students. The remaining over-utilization of 47.9 FTEs was primarily related to deferred program changes which did not occur until mid-year 2015-16.

Other

The Ministry is responsible for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC) which is a Treasury Board Crown corporation. Information on housing, including SHC's annual report for its fiscal year ended December 31, 2015, can be found at *www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/crown-corporations/saskatchewan-housing-corporation#forms-and-publications*.

2015-16 Expenditure Results

The following table outlines actual and budgeted expenditures by subvote and subprogram and provides explanations for significant variances.

Subvote/Allocation	2014-15 Actual	2015-16 Budget	2015-16 Actual	Variance Over/ (Under)	Notes
	(in thousands of dollars)				
Central Management and Services (SS01)					
Minister's Salary	$ 48	$ 48	$ 48	$ 0	
Executive Management	1,720	1,680	1,792	112	
Central Services	26,133	25,960	36,167	10,207	1
Accommodation Services	22,708	22,864	22,533	(331)	
Subvote Total	**$ 50,609**	**$ 50,552**	**$ 60,540**	**$ 9,988**	
Income Assistance and Disability Services (SS03)					
Saskatchewan Assistance Program	$ 163,694	$ 159,216	$ 161,798	$ 2,582	2
Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability	185,479	200,430	210,362	9,932	3
Transitional Employment Allowance	17,450	16,988	26,810	9,822	4
Seniors Income Plan	26,425	26,454	27,191	737	
Saskatchewan Employment Supplement	15,810	15,135	15,616	481	
Child Care Parent Subsidies	14,637	14,085	14,292	207	
Rental Housing Supplements	38,489	37,250	41,417	4,167	5
Income Assistance Community Services	2,797	2,863	2,810	(53)	
Disabilities Community-Based Organizations	153,153	172,905	161,404	(11,501)	6
Income Assistance and Disability Services Program Delivery	54,497	52,019	54,637	2,618	7
Seniors Personal Care Home Benefit	3,364	3,696	4,056	360	
Subvote Total	**$ 675,795**	**$ 701,041**	**$ 720,393**	**$ 19,352**	
Child and Family Services (SS04)					
Child and Family Program Maintenance and Support	$ 107,980	$ 97,205	$ 115,716	$ 18,511	8
Child and Family Community-Based Organization Services	81,405	87,509	84,854	(2,655)	9
Child and Family Program Delivery	44,905	41,429	45,716	4,287	10
Subvote Total	**$ 234,290**	**$ 226,143**	**$ 246,286**	**$ 20,143**	
Client Support (SS05)					
Service Centre Client Support	$ 12,195	$ 11,388	$ 12,200	$ 812	
Case Management Project	5,747	5,826	4,252	(1,574)	11
Subvote Total	**$ 17,942**	**$ 17,214**	**$ 16,452**	**$ (762)**	
Housing (SS12)					
Program Delivery	$ 6,342	$ 7,680	$ 6,348	$ (1,332)	12
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation	--	1,555	1,555	--	
Subvote Total	**$ 6,342**	**$ 9,235**	**$ 7,903**	**$ (1,332)**	
Total Expenditure	**$ 984,978**	**$ 1,004,185**	**$ 1,051,574**	**$ 47,389**	
Less: Capital Asset Acquisitions	(8,575)	(9,695)	(6,342)	3,353	13
Add: Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	4,185	6,610	5,737	(873)	
Total Expense	**$ 980,588**	**$ 1,001,100**	**$ 1,050,969**	**$ 49,869**	

Explanation of Significant Variances:

1. The over expenditure is a result of Emergency Social Services costs for wildfire evacuations partially offset by savings in IT costs. Special warrant funding of $12,000,000 was provided to cover costs related to Emergency Social Services.
2. Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) expenditures for the year were higher than budget mainly due to a cost per case pressure.
3. Increased costs for Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program were primarily due to a caseload increase. Special warrant funding of $12,700,000 was provided to manage the pressure.
4. Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) variance is attributed to a higher caseload compared to budget. There was a shift in caseload mid-year as new fully employable clients were referred to TEA rather than SAP.
5. For Rental Housing Supplements (RHS), caseload and cost per case were both higher than budget. Special warrant funding of $4,300,000 was provided to manage this program pressure.
6. Under expenditure relates to a staged approach to transition Valley View Centre clients to group homes and identifying alternative locations for certain clients, planned recovery of overpayments to some CBOs instead of increasing reserves, and deferred implementation of some programs.
7. The over expenditure is largely due to staffing for Valley View Centre transition homes and the delayed closure of some Valley View Centre services.
8. For Child and Family Program Maintenance and Support, the variance is primarily attributed to foster care costs as a result of increased caseload in emergency receiving, high cost placements for children with complex needs, and increased costs per case for special needs. Special warrant funding of $17,000,000 was provided to cover the increased costs.
9. Under expenditure relates to planned recovery of overpayments to some CBOs instead of increasing reserves and deferred implementation of some programs.
10. Over expenditure due to a salary pressure. Special warrant funding of $2,000,000 was provided to cover costs.
11. Savings in capital expenditures related to the Linkin Financials case management project.
12. Savings in salary costs related to vacancies.
13. Savings in capital expenditures related to the implementation of a system project.

Third-party Funding

In 2015-16, the Ministry provided $322.7 million in funding to third parties, the majority of which was provided to community-based organizations.

2015-16 Revenue Results

A summary of the Ministry's 2015-16 budgeted revenue compared to actual revenue is presented below with explanations for significant variances.

	(in thousands of dollars)				
Revenue by Source	2014-15 Actual	2015 -16 Budget	2015 -16 Actual	Variance Over/ (Under)	Notes
Sales, Services and Service Fees					
Management and Collection Services	$ 4,710	$ 4,710	$ 4,710	$ --	
Miscellaneous Medical and Institutional Services	919	674	748	74	
Other Miscellaneous Services	1	2	13	11	
Miscellaneous Deductions from Staff Salaries	55	66	48	(18)	
Subtotal	$ 5,685	$ 5,452	$ 5,519	$ 67	
Transfers from the Federal Government					
Young Offenders Agreement	$ 295	$ 942	$ 1,588	$ 646	1
Special Allowance for Children in Care	16,948	16,400	21,677	5,277	2
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada	5,508	3,016	9,370	6,355	3
Subtotal	$ 22,751	$ 20,358	$ 32,635	$ 12,278	
Other Revenue					
Maintenance Order Revenues	$ 696	$ 625	$ 734	$ 109	
Casual Revenue	20	45	18	(27)	
Realized Gain or Loss	--	--	--	--	
Repayment - Public Assistance	3,195	1,500	2,871	1,371	4
Refunds of Previous Years' Expenses	1,050	500	374	(127)	
Collection Agency Fees Withheld	(33)	--	(29)	(29)	
Subtotal	$ 4,928	$ 2,670	$ 3,968	$ 1,297	
Total Revenue	**$ 33,364**	**$ 28,480**	**$ 42,122**	**$ 13,642**	

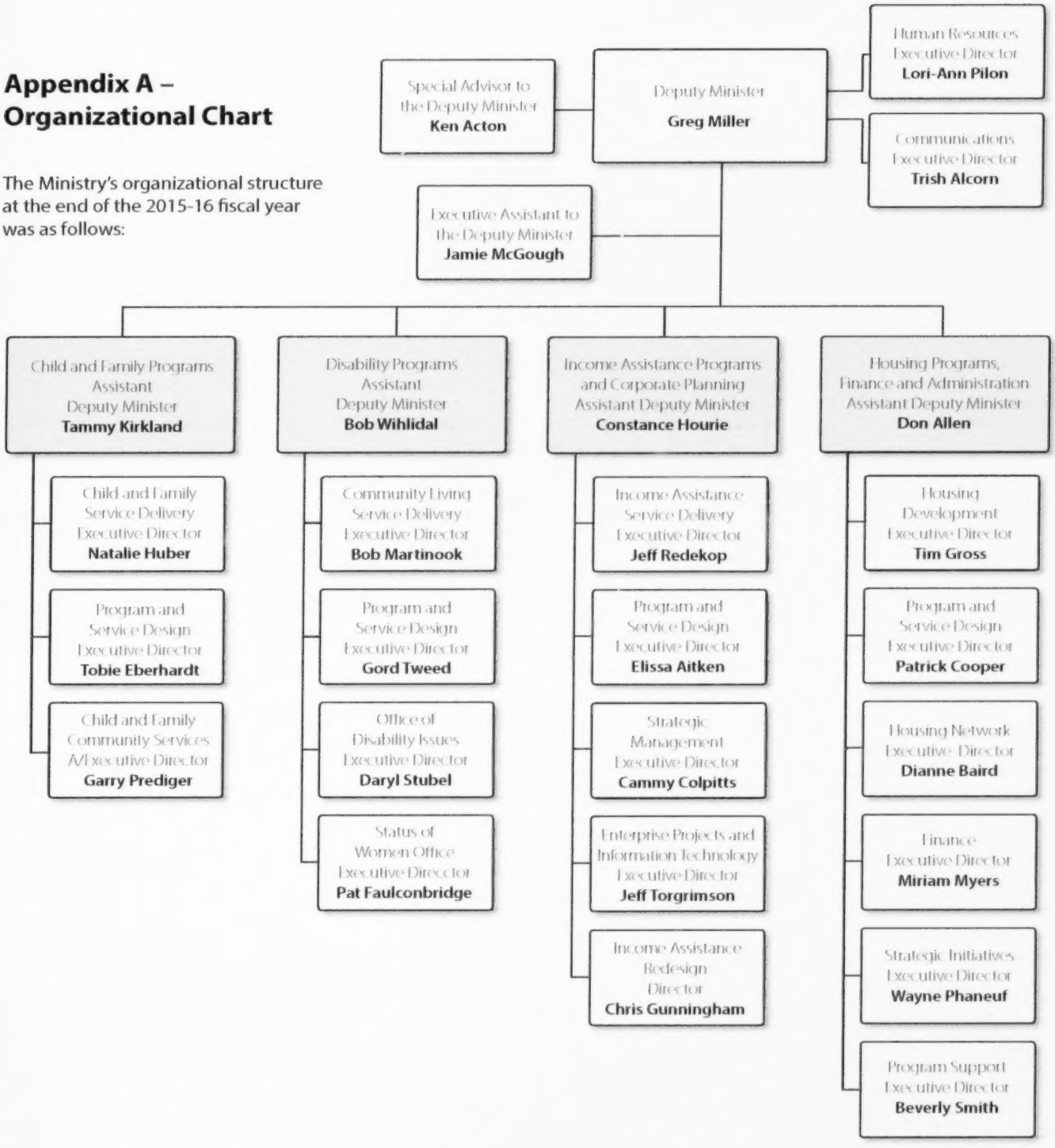
Explanation of Significant Variances:

1. The variance is due to the timing of the recognition of federal government transfers.
2. On January 1, 2015, the Federal Government increased the monthly amount of Children's Special Allowances to correspond to increases in the Universal Child Care Benefit. The variance is due to the increase for fiscal 2015-16 and the retroactive amount for January 1, 2015 to March 31, 2015.
3. The Ministry receives reimbursement from the Federal Government for Emergency Social Service expenses relating to First Nations emergency social services. The majority of the variance relates to reimbursement for the evacuation costs incurred as a result of the extensive wildfires.
4. Repayments from clients were higher than anticipated in the budget.

Appendices

Appendix A – Organizational Chart

The Ministry's organizational structure at the end of the 2015-16 fiscal year was as follows:



Appendix B – Our Work with Our Federal Housing Partner CMHC

Target Housing Programs and Services to Those in Need

Improving Housing Affordability

Affordability is related to the availability of housing across the housing continuum. Programs that increase the supply of housing targeted to low- to moderate-income earners provide opportunities for households that might not otherwise be able to afford housing.

On August 26, 2014, SHC signed a new five-year cost-sharing agreement with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The Investment in Affordable Housing 2014-19 (IAH Agreement) will see a combined investment of $91.9 million over the next five years. The overall outcome of this investment is to reduce the number of households in housing need by improving access to affordable housing that is sound, suitable and sustainable. Other intended outcomes include:

- reduce the demands for services and institutional living by increasing and extending independent living for households in need;
- increase the resources available to address the housing needs of households in need by encouraging contributions by others, including private and not-for-profit organizations;
- prevent the loss of affordable housing stock;
- foster training of skilled labour by supporting apprenticeships in the residential housing sector; and
- foster safe independent living through the support of new construction or renovating existing accommodation to benefit, for example, low- to moderate-income households and victims of family violence.

In 2015-16, a total of 595 households[1] are no longer in housing need as a result of the Investment in Affordable Housing. Outcomes achieved include: 326 households are no longer living in inadequate conditions; 33 seniors and 15 persons with disabilities are able to remain living independently; 15 victims of family violence were able to leave violent situations; and the supply of affordable housing was increased by 206 units.

CMHC and SHC foster the training of skilled labour by supporting apprenticeships in the residential housing sector. All projects that are expected to be prioritized for funding through the 2015 fall Request For Proposals (RFP) committed to employing apprentices on the job site. In the second year of the new IAH Agreement, 10 IAH funded projects from previous RFPs employed 112 apprentices, and eight proponents selected from the 2015 RFP committed to increasing awareness and promoting apprenticeship training during construction.

Since 2011, total funding of close to $63 million resulted in a total of 2,248 households being assisted in addressing their housing need. Outcomes achieved through the IAH Agreement include: 1,317 households are no longer living in inadequate conditions; 93 seniors and 38 persons with disabilities were able to remain living independently; 29 households were able to leave violent situations; and there was an additional 771 affordable housing units added, increasing supply in the province. There was also $3 million additional dollars generated through local partnerships to address housing needs in Saskatchewan.

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1. *To reflect results achieved, outcome numbers are based on unit completions. Due to the nature of construction and development time lags, numbers may differ from previous reports that were based on commitments.*

Appendix C – Ministry of Social Services Legislation

- *The Adoption Act, 1998 / Loi de 1998 sur l'adoption*
- *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*
- *The Child and Family Services Act*[1]
- *The Child Care Act, 2014*[2]
- *The Social Services Administration Act*[3]
- *The Donation of Food Act, 1995*
- *The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act*
- *The Human Resources, Labour and Employment Act*[4]
- *The Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Implementation Act*
- *The Rehabilitation Act*
- *The Residential Services Act*[5]
- *The Saskatchewan Assistance Act*
- *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act*
- *The Saskatchewan Income Plan Act*
- *The Social Workers Act*
- *The Women's Affairs Act*

1. *Except section 5, which is jointly assigned to the Ministers of Education and Social Services*
2. *Shared with the Ministry of Education*
3. *Sections 6, 7, 11-15 and 18, jointly assigned to the Ministers of Social Services, Justice and Attorney General, and Corrections and Public Safety; section 8 jointly assigned to the Ministers of Social Services and Education*
4. *Only with respect to section 4.03*
5. *Jointly assigned to the Ministers of Social Services; Health; Justice and Attorney General; and Corrections and Policing*

For More Information

Please visit *www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/ministries/social-services* for more information on the Ministry of Social Services' programs and services or call our Communications Branch at 306-787-3686.